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ABSTRACT

To clarify dominant perspectives on women in adult education publications, ethnographic content analysis was used to examine 112 journal articles in 4 major adult education journals. Articles analyzed were from two North American journals ("Adult Education"/"Adult Education Quarterly" and "Adult Leadership"/"Lifelong Learning") and two British journals ("Adult Education" (U.K.) and "Studies in the Education of Adults"). Five major perspectives on women were identified: (1) women as adult learners; (2) women's need for personal development; (3) women's role change and adjustment; (4) marginalization of women; and (5) women as collaborative learners. A sixth potentially emergent perspective was also found: women as feminists. Strengths and limitations of each perspective were described, along with implications for future scholarship on women and gender in adult education. Implications for scholarship that could form the foundation for new educational strategies were identified: (1) adult education research must start with women's experiences and perspectives as the focal point; (2) women's learning within formal education might be explored more extensively from the perspective of the learner; (3) adult education scholarship might strive for a more pluralistic understanding of women and men as learners; and (4) researchers might move toward a broader understanding of gender as a socially and culturally defined system that shapes and is shaped by adult education. (123 references) (YLB)

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WOMEN IN ADULT EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS OF PERSPECTIVES IN MAJOR JOURNALS

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to clarify dominant perspectives on women in adult education publications. Ethnographic content analysis was used to analyze 112 journal articles in four major adult education journals. Five dominant perspectives were identified, along with a sixth potentially emergent perspective. Strengths and limitations of each perspective are discussed, along with implications for future scholarship on women and gender in adult education.

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WOMEN IN ADULT EDUCATION:
AN ANALYSIS OF PERSPECTIVES IN MAJOR JOURNALS

Introduction

Since the early 1970s, feminist scholars have raised important criticisms regarding the exclusion and misrepresentation of women and women's experiences in previous scholarship. As a result, there has been a tremendous growth in research and theory that has generated new perspectives on women and gender. These perspectives are quite diverse, reflecting varied assumptions about women's experiences and characteristics.

To clarify and evaluate these assumptions, a number of scholars have developed classification schemes or models for analyzing scholarship on women in specific disciplines, such as psychology (Crawford & Marecek, 1989) and sociology (Ward & Grant, 1985). For example, Crawford and Marecek (1989) suggest that psychological research on women and gender has been guided by four different conceptual frameworks: exceptional women; women as problem (or anomaly); the psychology of gender; and transformation. While the authors point out certain benefits of each approach, they also identify significant potential problems with each of the first three frameworks. Ward and Grant (1985) based a classification scheme on themes from feminist critiques of sociological research. They identified three types of articles with a focus on women or gender. These types included additions, modifications, and recasts. The researchers used this typology to classify articles published in sociology journals over a ten year period. Their findings revealed only a small percentage of "recast" articles, which offer the most significant reconceptualizations of theory on women and gender.

Tetrault (1985) presents one of the most comprehensive and detailed models for analyzing scholarship on women. She identified what she describes as five common phases of thinking about women: male scholarship; compensatory scholarship; bifocal scholarship, feminist scholarship; and multifocal/relational scholarship. These phases were identified through a review of literature in anthropology, history, literature, and psychology, and were intended to be applicable across disciplines. Her model was used to assess faculty members' conceptualizations of women, women's studies curricula, and the images of women in textbooks. Among her findings was the discovery that high school history texts did not go beyond the third phase of scholarship in their treatment of women, and thus had significant limitations.

The work of Tetrault (1985) and these other authors indicate the importance of clarifying new and old assumptions about women that guide both research and educational programs in a discipline, to determine how adequately women's needs and experiences are addressed. One growing body of scholarship that has received little attention in previous feminist analyses is associated with the field of adult education. The practical as well as academic significance of adult education makes its knowledge base an object

of particular interest for educators and feminist scholars. Increasing numbers of adults are enrolling in higher education; business and industry are devoting greater resources to training and education; adult literacy education is the object of new public interest and government support. A growing number of doctorates are being awarded in the field and opportunities for graduate study are expanding. In addition, a significant number of students, educators, and administrators in all areas of adult education are women. Accordingly, women and gender are presumably salient topics in the field and feminist scholarship would have important implications for the literature.

Through an analysis of publications on women in major adult education journals, this study sought to identify and evaluate the perspectives on women that have influenced mainstream adult education research and practice. Specifically, the central objective of this study was to address the question: what are the dominant perspectives on women in selected adult education publications? The results of the study promised to provide a foundation for future research and theory-building in relation to women and gender issues in adult education.

Methodology

Data Source

The primary data base for this analysis was drawn from an earlier quantitative analysis of publications on women and gender in adult education journals (Hayes, 1992). Four primary sources were selected for analysis. These included two North American journals, Adult Education/Adult Education Quarterly (AE/AEQ), and Adult Leadership/Lifelong Learning (AL/LL) (both journals experienced a change in name during the period of analysis); and two British journals, Adult Education (U.K.) (AEBR) and Studies in the Education of Adults (SEA). Two of the journals are primarily research-oriented (AEQ and SEA) while the other two publish practice-oriented articles. These journals were selected for the initial study according to two criteria that were also relevant to the present analysis. First, to obtain a broad assessment of dominant perspectives, it was considered important to examine journals that publish articles on a wide range of adult education subfields, rather than more specialized publications. These journals also have national circulations and thus presumably represent the more influential publications in the field overall. Secondly, it was necessary that the journal had been in publication for a sufficient duration to permit analysis of trends over time. Specifically, these journals were selected since they had begun publication by the late 1960s, prior to the widespread emergence of feminist scholarship. Although this was not a primary purpose of the study, comparison of earlier and later perspectives might be suggestive of the impact of this feminist scholarship on the identified perspectives. Finally, for the purpose of the present study, these diverse journals permitted the identification of themes and topics that cross-cut specific educational settings and populations, and that relate to both research and educational practice.

Two major types of journal articles were selected for analysis. The first type included articles that dealt explicitly with women in adult education or women's educational programs. The second type included articles dealing with gender differences. To represent past as well as present perspectives, articles in the data base from the earlier study were drawn from publications from 1966 to 1988; for the present study, publications in 1989 and 1990 were also reviewed for appropriate articles. A total of 112 articles met the criteria and were included in the analysis.

Data Analysis

It was initially planned to use Tetrault's (1985) framework as the basis for this study, and to categorize articles according to the five stages that she identified. However, preliminary analyses suggested that her categories were too broad to represent adequately the perspectives on women that were reflected in the adult education literature. Accordingly, a grounded theory approach was used in this research, allowing for the generation of themes and categories specific to literature on women in adult education. This approach offered a more detailed picture of adult education scholarship on women, and promised to promote a greater understanding of the assumptions that guide adult education research and practice.

Given this exploratory nature of the study, ethnographic content analysis was used as the research methodology. In this approach, themes and categories are generated through the data analysis, rather than fitting the data into predetermined categories (Altheide, 1987; Kasworm, 1990). Three key questions guided the analysis of each article: How are women described? How are similarities/differences between women and men described and explained? What educational strategies for women are suggested? Comparative analysis of emerging themes led to the development of major conceptual categories or frameworks representing key perspectives on women in adult education. Each perspective consisted of certain assumptions about women's most distinctive characteristics as individuals and adult learners. Implicit or explicit in each perspective were also certain beliefs about the origins of these characteristics. Each article was categorized according to its dominant perspective. After this initial categorization, the articles in each perspective were again reviewed to identify potential clusters within perspectives, based on the authors' focus on specific aspects of women's experience in relationship to adult education.

Reliability is always a particular concern in qualitative studies such as this one. To establish reliability, two researchers were involved in data analysis. Each researcher analyzed and categorized articles independently. Articles from each journal were analyzed in small groups. After each group was analyzed and categorized, any discrepancies between researchers were noted and resolved through re-analysis or further refinement of the conceptual framework.

At least two limitations of the study and its methodology may be noted. First, while the nature of each perspective and the

categorization of each article was validated independently by the two co-researchers, the analysis and findings may have been affected by the researchers' own perspectives; this is a limitation inherent in all qualitative studies. Second, categories such as those identified in this study can somewhat obscure the variations that exist between articles with similar dominant perspectives, as well as the similarities that can be seen across perspectives. An attempt is made to note these variations and similarities in the description of each perspective. Ultimately, the identified framework is intended to promote reflection upon and further analysis of dominant assumptions about women in adult education. The framework does not represent absolute categories, nor all possible perspectives that might be identified in the literature.

Findings

Five major perspectives on women were identified through the content analysis. The perspectives included:

(1) women as adult learners;
(2) women's need for personal development;
(3) women's role change and adjustment;
(4) marginalization of women;
(5) women as collaborative learners.

In addition, a sixth perspective, labelled "women as feminist," was suggested by one article, which will be discussed separately. Key assumptions and educational implications of each perspective are described below.

Women as Adult Learners

Key Assumptions. In this perspective, women were treated as a particular group of learners defined by their sex. The dominant concern was not "women learners" but rather adult learners, who happen to be women. Typically, women were the object of attention because they hadn't previously been studied, because they had a certain attribute of interest, or simply due to convenience. No special importance was given to gender in relation to women's lives or learning. The sixteen articles that shared this perspective could be differentiated to some extent according to content: research studies or program descriptions.

Research studies. Eight articles described research studies that utilized all-female samples. In six articles (Blais et al, 1989; Clayton & Smith, 1987; Fagin, 1971; Hochman, 1981; Johnson et al., 1974; Tucker & Huerta, 1987), the topic of interest was one drawn from general adult education theory or practice, and women were selected for study to add to general knowledge about the topic. These topics included motivations for educational participation, deterrents to participation, the relationship of prison education to recidivism, adult performance on the College Level Examination Placement tests, adult developmental tasks, and adjustment to old age. In some cases, women had not been included in previous investigations of the topic; in other cases they had been part of mixed gender samples. In both instances, Fagin's (1971) comment is typical of the rationale for studying women:

> One of the major purposes of the College Level Placement

> Program (CLEP) is to give adults an opportunity to secure college level credit by examination . . . . A gap remains, however: to date masses of data are lacking to show whether adults in the general population - particularly women - can perform acceptably on such examinations (pp. 148-149)

In one article (Strychar, Griffith, Conroy & Sork, 1990), a learning opportunity unique to women - pregnancy - was the object of interest. However, the gender of the learners did not appear important except as a factor that delineated the research population; findings were related to general research and theories about self-directed learning. In a second article (Atkin & Hutchinson, 1981), responses in a women's magazine to an article about mothers returning to school were studied, but the purpose and conclusions of the study addressed the general need for information dissemination about educational opportunities.

Finally, one research study (Merriam & Mullins, 1981) associated with this perspective utilized a sample comprised of both women and men in a study of adult developmental tasks. Women and men were treated as separate groups in part of the analysis, differences between the two groups were identified and attributed to traditional role-related concerns. These differences led to the discussion of women as particularly responsive to adult education programs based on developmental tasks.

Program Descriptions. Six articles (Buckey, Freeark, & O'Barr, 1976; Greenblatt, 1968; Holst & Rouls, 1972; Rosenthiel, 1969; Stamper & Jones, 1989; Thompson, Ameiss, Wood, & Fagin, 1970) described adult education programs for women. While authors occasionally noted how program elements might accomodate a particular need of women, such as flexible scheduling, for the most part the gender of the learners was not noted as significant; frequently the students were described in terms such as adult learners or mature students. The emphasis was primarily on describing program characteristics and implications for adult education provision in general. For example, Thompson et al. (1970) described a program designed to train housewives as computer programmers; their primary purpose was to demonstrate how employers might successfully recruit and train part-time employees for specific workplace needs.

Finally, one article (Hill, 1979) described an individual woman's experiences as a returning student. The title of the article, "Celebrating the Adult Learner," indicates the "gender-neutral" nature of the discussion. Although the author notes that her father made her leave school because she was a girl, she makes no explicit connection between her identity as a woman and her experiences as an adult student.

Educational Implications. As noted above, implications of research results and program descriptions often were stated in terms of general adult education theory and practice. When educational approaches specifically for women were identified, strategies to recruit and retain women students were most frequently suggested. The need for childcare, flexible scheduling,

and financial assistance were among the typical recommendations. A marketing orientation, in which women were considered to be one of many potential target groups for adult education, was reflected in comments such as ". . . the most responsive consumers of programs based on the [adult developmental] tasks would be females, middle income adults and older adults" (Merriam & Mullin, 1981, p. 138). While commonly women were treated as a homogeneous group, a few articles did note potential differences among women based on characteristics such as age or income. Tucker and Huerta (1987) were the only authors that addressed the educational needs of an ethnic minority group of women.

Personal Development

Key Assumptions. The dominant concern in 32 articles was women's need for personal development. These articles characterized women as deficient in personal attributes such as self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as in social skills, communication skills and academic skills. Typically these deficiencies were attributed to women's generalized experiences as homemakers; it was assumed that this experience included relatively limited contact with the world outside the home and primary interaction with children. In some articles, women's skill deficiencies were also attributed to their generally lower levels of formal educational attainment. Interrupted schooling and aborted attempts to complete career training were again linked to women's homemaking and motherhood roles. Childhood socialization and general societal expectations that women should conform to a passive, dependent role were noted by a few authors as the cause of women's deficiencies; however, their focus remained on the need for individual remediation.

The central assumption reflected in this perspective was that women have a unique need for personal growth opportunities to overcome these deficiencies. The majority of articles associated with this perspective described special educational programs designed to provide such opportunities for women. The programs differed in their primary goals - preparation for higher education, vocational skills training, general noncredit education - but all included self-esteem, confidence-building and general self-enhancement as essential and often equally important program objectives. One subgroup of articles (Aird, 1980; Aird, Peacock & Brown, 1980; Dolan, Fitzgerald, Messer & Townsend, 1984; Hill, 1984; Kirk, 1982) described British "New Opportunities for Women" (NOW) programs that were designed to assist women "returners" to formal education in developing self-confidence and academic skills. Such programs typically included a combination of courses in liberal studies, such as literature and history, along with counseling sessions. Other articles (Bross, 1967; Mitchell, 1967; Simms, 1977; Swarbrick, 1978; Weidenbach, 1976) examined women's experiences or needs in other higher education programs. A second subgroup (Burrow, 1985; Hampton, 1975; Purdey, 1989; Wilson, 1985) focused on vocational training programs for women, such as the British "Wider Opportunities for Women" program. A third group of articles (Crowcraft, 1983; Hall, 1988; Oglesby, 1976; Pearson, 1971; Rowlands & Haggard, 1976; Salisbury, 1977; Stamper, 1986;

Stamper, 1986) described various adult education programs for women that were intended to enrich women's lives or skills in ways other than through preparation for higher education or employment. For example, Rowlands & Haggard (1976) described a "summer school for housewives" that included classes in English as well as drama, keep fit, child psychology, poetry writing and make-up. In a somewhat different example, Hall (1988) discussed workshops for training women to be effective members of voluntary organizations.

Several articles (Barbier, 1971; Boyd & Griffith, 1973; Thom, Ironside, & Hendry, 1975) offered specific recommendations for counseling programs, describing women's distinctive needs for vocational, personal and life-planning assistance. Two authors (Hartree, 1986; Osborn, 1971) described counseling "courses" to help women with this process of self-assessment, goal formulation and confidence-building.

Finally, a small number of articles (Berry, 1969; Brebner & Sundre, 1982; Lewis, 1969; Roehl, 1980; Wolf, 1986) focused more on the characteristics and needs of women learners rather than specific programs. Brebner & Sundre (1982), for example, identified four categories of women participants in a career development course - deciders, explorers, dabblers, and evaders - and suggested appropriate educational strategies for each group.

Educational implications. As noted above, the assumption in this perspective was that women's educational needs included enhanced skills or knowledge as well as greater confidence, assertiveness, and other affective needs. Meeting these affective needs was frequently considered to be as important as meeting other needs; in some cases, a priority to foster learning and change in other areas. Aird (1980) stated:

> It has seemed clear to us from the start that it is of little use, initially, to ask the majority of NOW students to make practical decisions about their future because the real issues which concern them are to do with feelings, self-image, attitude and assumption . . . it is for this reason that we provide both individual and group counseling (p. 40).

The specific goals of counseling sessions varied somewhat according to program emphases on vocational preparation, further education, or other goals; the broad goals described by Osborn (1971) are representive: self-understanding, goal-clarification, confidence-building, and decision-making in regard to education, employment and community service. A frequently mentioned counseling strategy was the use of small group discussion to foster mutual support and to help participants realize that their feelings and experiences were not "individual selfishness, inadequacy or aberration but shared by all women" (Thom, Ironside, & Hendry, 1975, p. 132).

The structure suggested for academic courses also was intended to accomodate women's affective needs. The importance of a comfortable, supportive classroom environment was frequently stressed. Elimination of grading and allowing time for sharing

personal experiences were among the recommended instructional techniques. Course schedules and assignments that did not interfere with women's responsibilities as mothers and homemakers were also suggested to reduce stress and promote participation.

The role of academic subject matter was typically given less emphasis in this perspective than instructional strategies and overall format. However, authors did note the importance of the intellectual aspect of programs, particularly from the perspective of the women students. Aird (1980) observed that "Frequently it was the academic study which, in itself, was exciting and self-developing for students who had never believed themselves capable of work of this nature. The most consistent demand at the end of the twenty-week course has been thus been for continued study" (p. 33).

Role Change and Adjustment

Key Assumptions. The 18 articles with this perspective characterized women as "transitional" - involved in a process of transition linked to changing roles in the family, workplace and society as a whole. Similar to the Personal Development perspective, women were assumed to have distinctive problems that affect their characteristics and needs as learners. However, in these articles the causes of those problems were attributed to changes in their social roles rather than simply personal deficiencies.

The majority (11) of articles with this perspective (Agin & Prather, 1977; Bolton, 1980; Clarke, 1975; Ellwood, 1968; Elshof & Konek, 1977; Hughes, 1973; Hutchinson, 1971; Knapp, 1981; Loring, 1969; Rossi, 1967; Schindler-Rainman, 1970) focused on the impact of women's increased participation in the workforce and in the community. These articles identified social factors, such as changing attitudes towards women, increased longevity, improved technology, and economic demands that have created both opportunities and needs for women to seek paid employment and pursue positions of greater influence in society. Attention was given to critiquing assumptions that women were not mentally or physically capable of assuming such roles. The dominant theme was that it was both possible and desirable for women to take on these new roles, both for the benefit of themselves as well as society. The belief that women could and should embrace expanded or dual roles was widely expressed. This perspective suggests not only confidence in women's ability; the more implicit belief was that women's traditional responsibilities were not so demanding as to preclude other activities. The typical assumption appeared to be that women's primary role, prior to this period of transition, was that of full-time homemaker. This assumption indicates a clear bias towards using middle-class married women as the norm, neglecting the very different life situations of working or lower class women as well as employed, single women. Similar to the Personal Development perspective, the homemaker role was characterized as restrictive and inadequate as a means of self-development for women, although not necessarily an unimportant role. Two articles stressed that the roles of mother and homemaker should retain

priority for women in relation to other roles.

The process of transition was not characterized as easy, for several reasons. Societal values and attitudes, discrimination in the workplace and family conflicts were discussed in some articles as barriers to women's role changes. Some articles noted potential barriers in educational institutions, such as inconvenient scheduling, instructor attitudes, or lack of childcare. However, the most attention was given to emotional barriers to change created by women themselves. These psychological problems included guilt about neglecting certain roles in favor of others and ambivalence about new roles. For example, Hughes (1973) stated:

> . . . the physical or legal barriers to women having a career are diminishing. The emotional barriers, however, are still in many cases very strong and women are often caught in the dilemma between claiming their working rights and appearing to renounce or neglect their traditional home/mother role. (p. 166)

Women's self-image was also characterized as restrictive:

> . . . women, by and large, lack a potent self-image. Many women don't think they can do very much and they think and say it is a full-time job to keep husbands, and families, happy...there has been a lack of risk-taking by women themselves. (Schindler-Rainman, 1970, p. 305)

Two articles varied from the majority by their focus on individual lifespan changes as the primary cause of women's life transitions and role change. Holt (1982) addressed midlife transitions, while Liley (1969) examined biological changes across the lifespan and how they impact women's abilities and achievement. These articles, similar to those described above, shared the perspective that psychological factors rather than physical limitations prevented women from assuming more fulfilling roles across the lifespan; limited opportunities and societal attitudes were also identified as restrictive.

Three articles (Lewis, 1983; Rice, 1979; Rice, 1982) focused on the adult student role itself as problematic for women. These articles shared a primary concern with the impact of women's marital relationships on their educational participation. In contrast to other articles, resistance to role change was attributed to the husband as well as wife; for example, the husband's potential ambivalence about the wife's new student role was noted by Rice (1979). In a related article, Rice (1982) uses the concept of "couples in transition" to locate the role conflict not in individual women, but rather in their relationships with their husbands. These articles also differed from others in emphasizing the potential need for changed or transformed roles (not simply additional roles) for men as well as women.

Two other articles (Modi, 1989; Wilson, 1990) associated with this perspective varied from the rest by discussing the immigration

experience as a source of role change for immigrant women. However, the significance of gender in women's experience of such conflicts was minimalized; the primary concerns were cultural conflict and adjustment to new societal expectations.

Educational Implications. From this perspective, adult education could best respond to women's needs by helping them adjust to their new roles in society. The dominant assumption clearly was that role change was primarily an individual problem and might be treated as such. Even in an article that described the role of adult educator as "change agent," change on an individual level was emphasized: "the adult educator's role then becomes one of understanding the changing attitudes of women and to be a supportive agent for the individual undergoing significant intellectual and emotional growth" (Clarke, 1975, p.123). Counseling and special course content were typically stressed as means of helping women deal with the emotional barriers to change as well as limited awareness of new career alternatives. Elshof and Konek (1977), who provide one of the more detailed descriptions of the support that adult education might provide, are somewhat unique in suggesting the need for women's studies courses: "Classes which consider the socialization process, the women's movement and role expectations as they affect women's lives can be positively reinforcing to women in transition" (p.241). However, the ultimate purpose is to "provide a support system which faciliates re-entry into serious academic pursuits and encourages goal-setting for professional and social role redefinition" (p 241).

In recognition of women's multiple roles, other support services such as daycare and financial aid, as well as flexible course scheduling were also suggested.

In a few cases, adult educators were encouraged to consider education of other audiences. Hughes (1973) suggests that adult educators should educate the public as well:

> Just as important as the various types of provision for women is the change of attitude necessry, both on the part of women themselves and the general public, so that they take as normal the conbination of a woman's right to her own self-fulfilment and her role as mother. So it could be seen that the role of adult educationalist at all levels is that of 'communicator,' helping to make easy the transition from one set of values to another... (p.169)

Education of girls and young women was also discussed as important to prepare them more adequately for the varied roles they might choose to adopt. The articles that focused on the adult student role also included counseling for husbands or couples as also important to ease women's transition into new roles and assist with the development of new family role configurations.

Marginalization

Key Assumptions. This perspective was characterized by the assumption that societal factors create and maintain discriminatory

and oppressive situations for women in the family, workplace and educational institutions. While the Role Conflict and Adjustment perspective also recognized the impact of social forces on women's lives, the assumption was that such forces were creating positive changes in women's opportunities, and therefore women primarily needed to develop new skills and attitudes to take advantage of these opportunities. In contrast, within the Marginalization perspective, societal changes as well as individual change were considered essential elements of positive change for women. Articles associated with this perspective varied in their concern with different sources of women's marginalization, and thus in their positions on the role of adult education in promoting this change. However, a common assumption was that adult education has the potential to make a significant contribution to the creation of a more equitable status for women. This perspective characterized 41 of the articles, the largest number for any perspective identified in the analysis, and slightly more than one-third of the total. This large number permitted the identification of subgroups of articles based on the source of marginalization that was their primary concern. These subgroups are described below.

Societal forces. One subgroup of articles was distinguished by their attention to broad societal and cultural forces that have contributed to women's marginalization (Brown, 1975; Dillon, 1975; Lengrand, 1975; Mumba, 1988; Ntiri, 1979; Osborn, 1975; Somerville, 1975; Tucker, 1969). These eight articles identified such factors as political and economic structures, religious traditions and cultural belief systems that perpetuate women's inferior status. With one exception (Tucker, 1969), these articles dealt with women's issues in nonWestern nations or in an international context, rather than specifically in the United States or Great Britain. Five were in a special Adult Leadership issue on women published in 1975, International Women's Year.

Employment. The thirteen articles in this group treated women's unequal status in the workforce as a primary concern. Six articles (Bruce & Kirkup, 1985; Catlett, 1986; Gaffga, 1976; Loring, 1975; Mace & Wolfe, 1988; Murphy, 1989) dealt with the inferior status of women in various occupations and the potential role of education as a means of enhancing their status within the workforce. For example, Bruce & Kirkup (1985) analyzed women's underrepresentation in scientific and technological fields and critiqued several training programs designed to promote their greater participation in these areas. The remaining seven articles focused on barriers experienced by adult women entering the workforce after raising a family or undergoing a divorce (Davidson, 1976; Gaillard, 1979; Jacobs, 1982; Kelly, 1988; Purley, 1990; Rice, 1979; Wong, 1979).

Adult education provision. The twelve articles in this subgroup identified discriminatory practices that created have biases in adult education provision for women. Adult education curricula were criticized by a number of authors for perpetuating women's traditional roles and status (Bateson & Bateson, 1989; Cousin, 1990; Farley, 1976; Gray & Hughes, 1980; Krajnc, 1975).

Cohen (1980) identified negative consequences of sex-role stereotypical behavior in classroom settings. Highet (1986) analyzed several community-based women's programs and identified ways that the programs as a whole were contributing to women's socialization into traditional roles. Cooke, Ellis and Jotham (1985) challenged the "myth" that adult women do not desire nor have the aptitude to participate in computer education. In contrast, Casling (1986) challenged the devaluing of "women's subjects" in comparison to more traditionally male content areas. In a somewhat different vein, Lovell (1980) identified a number of situational factors, such as lack of childcare and "spouse sabotage" that prevented women from achieving equal benefits from college re-entry programs. Finally, Bateson and Bateson (1989) and Coats (1989) also pointed out that particular groups of women, such as minority and working-class women, may still be overlooked in general adult education provision for women. Westwood (1984) discussed how adult education reproduces both class and gender-related inequities, and provided a detailed anthropological analysis of the conflicts between shopfloor culture and women's participation in adult education.

Adult education profession. Eight articles addressed discrimination against women in the adult education profession and knowledge base. Unequal treatment of women as teachers, administrators, policy-makers and professors was identified (Brown, 1987; Hughes, 1990; Jenkins, 1989; Kidd, 1975; Merriam, 1985; Park, 1977). Long (1975) analyzed women's educational participation in Colonial America, suggesting that a previous emphasis on formal education created a misrepresentation of the extent of women's educational opportunities. In one of few articles that made specific reference to feminist scholarship, Hugo (1990) discussed the marginalization of women in general historical analyses of adult education.

Educational Implications. A variety of educational strategies were suggested in these articles to overcome women's marginalization. Similar to other perspectives, there were recommendations for support services, such as childcare and flexible scheduling to increase women's access to adult education. However, at least some authors also pointed out that support services would not eliminate the real barriers to women's educational participation:

> But much more fundamental measures are necessary than adequate nursery provision. A change in social relationships is needed which would necessarily demand an equal responsibility for 'parenting' by both father and mother. At present women are restricted to a part-time work role which confers upon them the status of part-time people and forces them to see themselves in this way (Lovell, 1980)

Adult educators were urged to use several kinds of strategies to help women overcome oppressive situations. Women's studies was advocated to "provide women with the opportunities to discover and

come to terms with themselves as individuals in their own right and with their own life experience" (Gray & Hughes, 1980, p. 304); it was also intended to help students "examine the position of women from a wider political perspective . . . the nature and causes of the oppression of women would be discussed and the necessity for collective forms of action established" (ibid). Participatory, collaborative instructional strategies were suggested as the most appropriate means of fostering such learning and in particular of building on women's strengths as learners. The role of adult educators in fostering social change was also extended beyond the classroom by some authors. Employers, women's organizations and other educational providers were among the groups identifed as those whom adult educators might seek to educate about women's needs.

Strategies to eliminate women's marginalization within the adult education profession were more difficult to identify in the literature. Global recommendations were made for employers to eliminate discrimination against women in hiring and promotion. Merriam (1985) suggested that female faculty members form coalitions to address discrimination in the profession. In terms of the adult education knowledge base, Hugo (1990) provided a detailed discussion of how historians in adult education might go beyond a compensatory approach to the study of women and incorporate gender issues in their research on adult education provision and the adult education profession.

Women as Collaborative Learners

Key Assumptions. This perspective was distinguished by the assumption that women have a primary concern with interpersonal relationships, which serve as a key source of their self-identity and personal development. Accordingly, women were characterized as more able to learn from one another, or in a collaborative mode, than alone or in a competitive mode. Gender was seen as the basis for this preferred learning style; in contrast, men were assumed to place more value on autonomy and individual achievement as their source of identity and growth, and thus to be more likely to succeed in competitive or autonomous learning situations. The research of Gilligan (1982) and Belenky et al. (1986) was cited in two articles to support these differences between women and men. Since the articles associated primarily with this perspective were found only in the most recent five year period of the analysis, it may represent a new trend in adult education scholarship on women. However, while this perspective was dominant in only four articles, this small number is a somewhat misleading indication of the extent that these asssumptions appeared in the literature. The assumption that women prefer collaborative learning situations appeared as a minor theme in a number of earlier articles with other more dominant perspectives.

Two articles associated with this perspective were research studies that investigated women's actual preferences for collaborative learning situations (Beer & Darkenwald, 1989; Bostock, Seifert, & McArdle, 1987). A third article (Kazemek, 1988) used Belenky et al.'s work (1986) as the basis for advocating the

use of collaborative learning strategies with adult literacy students. The fourth article (Lambert, 1989) shifted the focus to women's role in educational management, suggesting that women might be particularly suited to use participatory management styles.

Educational implications. The prevailing assumption in this perspective was that existing educational programs do not support women's preferences for collaborative learning. Beer and Darkenwald (1989) recommended the use of new teaching strategies specifically for women; Bostock et al. (1987) conclude that women may learn best in cooperative situations when taught separately from men. In contrast, Kazemek (1988) argues that new educational approaches might be beneficial for men as well as women:

> As adult literacy educators, we can begin to explore alternative methods of instruction from the one-on-one approach which is primary in the United States. . . The most obvious alternative is the collaborative learning circle . . . Such learning circles would not only build on women's ways of understanding themselves and others, but would also help to foster an "ethic of caring" among all members, both male and female. (p. 24)

Women as Feminist

As noted earlier, a sixth perspective was suggested by one article. In "Feminist Challenges to Curriculum Design" (Parsons, 1990), the author described feminist criticisms of traditional education and offered examples of feminist approaches to curriculum design. Similar to the Marginalization perspective, societal factors, in this case educational curricula, were assumed to create oppression for women. However, this article differed from the majority of Marginalization articles in at least two important ways: (a) its discussion of explicitly feminist educational strategies, and (b) its comparison and critique of several alternative feminist approaches. In other words, rather than providing a critique of adult education from a single feminist (or other) perspective, the author analyzed feminist educational strategies and their differing implications for adult education. Thus, the article represents a potentially important step toward a broader understanding of feminist education itself. The author does not advocate the use of one particular set of strategies as a guide for practice. However, she does present the strongest argument for a socialist feminist approach, which "is concerned to make possible a new way of structuring gender relations" (p. 57) for the benefit of men as well as women.

Discussion

The findings of this analysis reveal varied perspectives on women in adult education literature. These perspectives are based on different assumptions about women's characteristics as learners, differences between women and men, and suggest the need for different educational strategies. Each perspective has certain strengths and limitations in terms of its potential contribution to our understanding of women and gender differences, as well as in

its utility as a basis for appropriate educational strategies.

The Women as Adult Learners perspective is the most clearly limited in terms of its treatment of women. A positive contribution of articles with this perspective is their explicit recognition and concern with women as a group. In addition, this perspective offers the possibility of exploring previously unexamined aspects of women's lives and learning; for example, women's learning during pregnancy (Strychar et al., 1990). However, the lack of attention to the significance of gender in women's lives and experiences as learners creates severe limitations in this perspective's contribution to theory or educational practice for women, or to general knowledge in adult education. The individualistic orientation of many articles led to the lack of real analysis of how the process or content of women's learning might be related to gender-related social norms. For example, Blais et al. (1989) identify lack of incentives and stressful working conditions as major barriers to educational participation for nurses, yet they make little attempt to relate these concerns to the nature of nursing as a female profession. Strychar et al. (1990) found that the majority of women's learning about health-related issues during pregnancy was other-initiated; how this might be related to women's particular relationship with health professionals was not addressed. Further, there was a tendency to compare women negatively to dominant models of desirable behavior. For example, women were discovered to be "dependent" on others in their learning (Strychar et al. 1990); in need of counseling since they lacked dominant positive motives for returning to school (Clayton & Smith, 1987), and in need of training programs to change their negative attitudes toward continuing professional education (Blais et al, 1989).

Authors writing from the Personal Development perspective go beyond the Women as Adult Learners perspective by explicitly acknowledging the relationship of women's characteristics as learners to gender-related roles and socialization. While the focus was typically on the problematic nature of women's characteristics, their deficiencies were not portrayed as inherent, but ameneable to change. Accordingly, the goal of adult education most often was to help women overcome their limitations. Crawford and Marecek (1989) who identify similar perspectives in psychology literature, point out significant limitations of the assumptions underlying such perspectives. First, the extent that certain personal traits are characteristic of women is not well-supported, and generalizations about these traits threaten to obscure the diversity of women's individual experiences and skills. Second, the negative evaluation of women's characteristics is problematic because of its implicit or explicit comparison of women to a "norm" of male behavior. Typically, educational efforts were designed to help women attain stereotypically masculine behavior, such as greater assertiveness or independence. The question that remains unanswered is "If the stereotypical female is problematically unassertive, why is the stereotypical male not problematically overassertive?" (Crawford & Marecek, 1989, p. 153). Thus, by its assumption of deficiency, this

perspective prevents an appreciation of women's characteristics as strengths developed to meet the demands of their social roles. In fact this negative bias was extended to women's roles as housewives and mothers, which frequently were considered restrictive, unchallenging, and accordingly the source of women's deficiencies. Therefore, the perspective excludes from consideration a potentially large aspect of women's learning by implicitly suggesting that women's learning experiences in the home or related to female roles such as childrearing are nonexistent or unimportant. The strengths as learners that women might bring to formal education experiences are also obscured.

The perspective represented by Role Conflict and Adjustment moves beyond the Personal Development perspective in some ways. While women are still perceived to be "problematic," the primary locus of the problem is shifted from women's personal characteristics to their roles. Women's life situations are assumed to be different in important ways from men's yet not deficient in the way they are portrayed in the Personal Development perspective. Since the pressures experienced by women related to role chnages are social in nature, this perspective creates the possibility of a social critique. However, for the most part such a critique is not provided in these articles. Instead, women's problems remain individual in nature; i.e., women's inability to cope with new roles is the issue, rather than problems in the roles themselves or the societal forces that contribute to role expectations. Further, there was a tendency in some articles to blame women for creating problems for others, again rather than locating the problem in role change itself. In one particularly negative example, women were criticized for resenting their roles as mothers and neglecting their children (Liley, 1969). In a second example, working mothers were again described as potentially neglectful of their children, thus creating a problem for society (Hughes, 1973).

From a positive stance this perspective invites an appreciation of the complexity of women's lives and suggests that educators not only provide special support for women, but also make adjustments in educational programming that accomodate women's role demands. However, due to the prevailing assumption that changes such as expanded or dual roles were reasonable and appropriate, the tendency remains to blame women if not successful in meeting new role demands. Among other concerns, this individualistic orientation potentially limits the ability of educators to assist women undergoing role changes that might in reality create unrealistic demands.

The Marginalization perspective offers a contrast to the above perspectives by locating women's concerns in a social context. By pointing out the institutional and societal factors that contribute to women's disadvantage in relation to men, this perspective offers educators a new understanding of women's experiences, and suggests a potentially more dynamic role as change agents. A negative aspect of this perspective, similar to Personal Development and Role Conflict, is the continued preoccupation with women's "problems." In this case, there is the tendency to view women as passive

victims of oppression, who need to be "saved" through the efforts of adult educators. A particular deficiency is a lack of attention to how some women have actively resisted oppressive social forces. An obvious example is the women's movement, which provided the context for much of the discussion of women's education. As noted by Tetrault (1985), an emphasis on women's experience of oppression also overlooks the fact that some women have had power, and that some women have resisted efforts to change women's oppressed situation. Curiously, many of the articles about women's oppression were written by women who do not examine their own deviation from the general picture of disadvantage. Further, only one article (Westwood, 1984) suggested how women themselves, through the creation of a culture resistant to oppressive forces, unwittingly reinforced traditionally feminine roles and contributed to their own ongoing marginalization in the workplace and in adult education.

This perspective, then, as with others, provides limited understanding of women's strengths as learners and their learning in the context of female roles. By its lack of attention to how change has been initiated by women themselves, in many cases without the assistance of educators, it neglects an important source of guidance for change efforts. Further, by leaving women's own potential resistance to change unexamined, this perspective does not prepare educators for barriers they may encounter to change efforts.

A central strength of the Women as Collaborative Learners perspective is the assumption that women's characteristics are not deficient in relation to men. This assumption can lead to a critique of the educational system rather than individual women if women are perceived to be less successful as learners in formal education. However, a potential pitfall with this perspective is that the image of women as deficient still may be perpetuated, though very subtly, through the idea that women as a group are different from men in key individual characteristics. This problem is particularly likely due to the ideal of the autonomous, self-directed learner that is widely reflected in the adult education literature, which itself reflects societal value placed on independence and individuality. An additional problem with this perspective, similar to the Personal Development perspective, is the reinforcement of stereotypes about women and men that are often based on little substantive evidence. These broad generalizations do not take into account the great potential diversity that exists among women (or among men). While authors writing from this perspective typically were careful to note that not all women might exhibit collaborative traits, discussions tended to fall back into generalized descriptions with little attempt to qualify stereotypes.

This last point reflects a problem common to all perspectives. In many articles, there was little attention given to how race, culture, socioeconomic class or other factors might lead to differences in women's experiences and needs. Only a small number of articles focused specifically on racial or ethnic minority

women. In part, this is likely due to the predominance of white, middle-class individuals among both educators and students in adult education. The female learner described or studied in the literature tended to be a white middle-class woman who also typically was married and a mother. Not only were potential class or cultural differences minimized, differences among women related to lifestyle (single, childless) often went unrecognized. The potential significance of such differences can be seen in relation to each perspective. For example, the Personal Development and Role Conflict perspectives are based on assumptions that women have similar experiences as homemakers. However, in contrast to middle-class wives (in the past), married working-class women typically held outside employment in addition to their homemaking responsibilities. For working-class women, personal development may still be an issue but not due to "isolation" from the outside world attributed to the middle-class housewife experience; role conflicts between simply holding a job and homemaking may not be significant for working-class women, though conflicts between relative priority of these roles may be similar for both working-class and middle class women. As another example, the Marginalization perspective typically reflected the assumption that all women have a common experience of subordination as women; however, the added impact of race and class-related oppression is likely to make that experience quite different for women of different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Finally, the potential of Women as Feminist as an emerging perspective is worthy of note. A contribution of this perspective is its explicit attention to feminist education and feminist educators within the context of adult education. This provides the opportunity to identify and understand feminists' proactive efforts to create positive change for themselves and other women. In addition, as the diversity within feminism becomes apparent, it becomes possible to clarify the values and political agendas that underlie alternative feminist approaches. The effectiveness of these alternatives in overcoming gender-related inequities can be assessed, at least in theory. This perspective's limitations lie, however, in its potential lack of examination of the societal factors that have and continue to shape feminist theory and education itself. As a guide for educational practice, discussions of feminist perspectives may have limited value if barriers to the implementation of any feminist strategies are ignored. Weiler's (1988) research, for example, revealed several kinds of constraints on feminist teachers' use of feminist strategies. These included the patriarchical structure of educational institutions, student resistance to feminist approaches, and the nature of the student-teacher relationship, complicated by differences in race, class and gender.

Conclusions

Despite their limitations, all of the identified perspectives have contributed new insights regarding women in adult education. The challenge facing educational researchers and practitioners is how to build on these contributions while going beyond the

limitations of existing perspectives. Evidence of some new trends exist, such as the appearance of the Women as Collaborative Learners and Women as Feminist perspectives in recent years. Several articles associated with other perspectives, such as Hugo (1990) and Westwood (1984), also were suggestive of new ways of understanding women in adult education; from these articles and current feminist scholarship in other disciplines, several strategies may be suggested as a starting point for creating new perspectives on women in adult education. The focus in this discussion will be on implications for scholarship as such scholarship can form the foundation for new educational strategies.

First, in order to overcome the deficiency assumption that pervaded much of the literature, adult education research must start with women's experiences and perspectives as the focal point of investigation. Women may be perceived as deficient because they are seen from the perspective of educators located within a patriarchical educational system; within this system, women become deficient because they are evaluated against norms based on men's experiences. Instead, researchers might give more attention to women's learning outside of the formal educational system, in the home, workplace, and community. Hugo (1990) points out that groups such as women's clubs, parent-teacher associations, and consumer groups offer fruitful contexts for understanding how women have used education for the benefit of themselves and society. Westwood's (1984) analysis of women's shopfloor culture offers a particularly good example of the new insights that might be derived from study of women's informal learning in the workplace.

Secondly, women's learning within formal education might be explored more extensively from the perspective of the learner, and within the framework of critical feminist theories on gender and education. Potential models are offered by Fuller (1984) and Gaskell's (1985) studies that utilized concepts of resistance and cultural production to illuminate girls' experiences in school. They clarified how girls both accomodate and resist oppressive institutional and cultural factors, thus stressing the girls' agency and struggle rather than their simple acquiescence to social constraints. Building on this theoretical approach, Weiler (1988) investigated the work of feminist teachers in a public high school. As Weiler states, such research "is meant to move beyond feminist studies which view schools as simply the site of the reproduction of gender oppression or which celebrate the resistance of girls to schools as oppressive patriarchical institutions intended to repreduce both class and gender oppression" (p, 153). Instead, this kind of approach illuminates both the possibilities as well as the limitations of education as a means of social change. In a similar way, studies of feminist teaching in the context of adult education might yield new understanding not only of women's experiences, but also more broadly clarify the dynamics of transformative education.

Thirdly, adult education scholarship might strive for a more pluralistic understanding of both women and men as learners. The significance of class, race, and culture in combination with gender must be considered when describing learner characteristics or

educational experiences. Exploring the intersection of these variables and their implications for understanding individual behavior is of growing concern for feminist scholars in a variety of disciplines.

Finally, researchers might move toward a broader understanding of gender as a socially and culturally defined system that both shapes and is shaped by adult education. Not only do we need a better understanding of how gender systems have influenced educational programs and the learning experiences of women; as Hugo (1990) also notes, we also might ask how women have used adult education to resist and transform gender relations.

This last point suggests one of many potential contributions of adult education to general scholarship on women and gender. As an expanding and diverse educational arena, with women as its most rapidly growing student population, adult education represents a societal factor with a potentially significant relationship to both the maintenance and change of gender-related roles and norms. A better understanding of this relationship promises to yield valuable new insights about women and gender that can inform many disciplines.

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